

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala protect and preserve him),
Vice President Darul Uloom Karachi

Memories

(Episode 7)

Pakistan was created in such a state that the assets which came to Pakistan's share as a result of the partition of India were of a small proportion. Additionally, many assets were left over in India, the dispute for reclaiming which continued for a long time. Thus, the Government of Pakistan had begun its operations with extremely limited resources. At that time Karachi was the capital, and the Secretariat of Ministries used to operate from a room made of tin sheets. Stones were used in place of paper weight, and thorns would be used to bind sheets of paper instead of pins. At the same time the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan formed an "Islamic Education Board", which also made its office beside the Assembly in a room with a potsherd roof. Hazrat 'Allamah Sayyad Sulaiman Nadwi (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was invited to be the president of the board, and our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was also made a member. The purpose of this board was to draft proposals to incorporate Islamic teachings into the Constitution, which was still being developed at that time. In this capacity our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was provided with a quarter for rent in Jacob Line. On the other side our eldest sister, (late) respected Na'eema Khatoon Sahiba came from India to Karachi, together with her husband and children. Thus, after staying in "King's Court" for almost one year our respected father temporarily gave this flat to our sister and moved to the quarter in Jacob Line.

Now the Madrasa at Jacob Line which was established by Hazrat Maulana Ihtishamul Haq Thanwi (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), and where my elder brothers were already studying, became close to our new house, and I was considered old enough to study in this Madrasa. However our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) , perhaps looking at my fragile and skinny figure and slim and slender body, in contrast to my four brothers, did not enroll me for memorization of the Quran, and made me directly start learning a mix of Urdu and Farsi which began with "Hamd-e-Baari" (Praise of The Creator). This is a book written by (late) Maulana Abdus Samee' Bedil Sahab in which the meanings of various words are described in Mathnavi¹ poems. Maulana Abdus Samee' Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) belonged to the Barelvi school of thought, but since this book was considered beneficial for helping children memorize the meanings of words, the scholars of Deoband did not let any sectarian bigotry come in the way of benefitting from it, and this book was thus taught in all Madrasas. I began studying this book and "Risalah Nadir", which is a book teaching conjugation of Persian words, and was written by our respected paternal grandfather Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Yaseen Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), with Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) in the Madrasa at Jacob Line. However, due to my small age this study was haphazard; I

¹ A kind of poem

would study whenever I liked and would take leave whenever I wanted. Also, I would study one chapter with one teacher and another with some other teacher. Among the sons of Hazrat Maulana Ihtishamul Haq Sahab Thanwi (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) Maulana Ihtiramul Haq Sahab was a little older than me and Maulana I'tisamul Haq Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala protect them both) was around the same age as me. After finishing my haphazard lessons most of my time would be spent with them, and sometimes in sitting in the gatherings which took place at the house of Hazrat Maulana Ihtishamul Haq Sahab Thanwi (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). Another reason for my lessons being disorganized was that in those days I suffered from Typhoid several times due to which I had to spend entire months bedridden.

On the other side our brother (respected Muhammad Zaki Kaifi (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him)) shifted to Lahore at that time, and had established a bookstore there called Idara-e-Islamiyat. The birth of his first child was being expected in his house (who was named "Muhammad Mas'ood Ghawwas" and passed away few days after his birth), for which our respected mother travelled to Lahore. Since I was her darling child she would not travel without me. Honoured brother Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafee' Usmani (May his shade be extended), whom in the informal atmosphere of the house I call "Brother Rafee", and for the sake of brevity and to express frankness I will continue to do so in this biography, had accompanied our respected mother as her Mahram. We had to stay there with our respected mother for around two months. Since respected brother was memorizing the Quran at that time, he continued his memorization with a teacher at Jamiya Ashrafiya. My education was already disorganized so there was no question of finding a proper replacement for me. However, whenever our respected mother (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon her) got some free time she would teach me from Bahishti Gohar and Seerat-e-Khatamul Anbiya. The remaining time would be spent in visiting places and leisure walks.

I cannot forget one event of one of those leisure walks. It was a time of extreme cold. Bhai Rafee' would often visit "Gulshan-e-Fatima" of Lawrence Garden in the evening, along with (late) Muhammad Mu'een Sahab who was the son of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Mateen Khateeb Sahab. It used to be an exceptionally beautiful garden at that time. I would also go along sometimes. There was a beautiful pond right in the middle of the garden. One time, while the two of them were busy talking, I began practicing to walk on the thin edge of the pond. The practice was successful for a while, but then suddenly my foot slipped from the wet edge and I plunged into the pond with a splash, and started drowning. In the extreme cold of December and the freezing cold pond, I could see death within a moment. The pond was not too deep, but it was deep enough to drown a child like me.

Brother Rafee' and Brother Mu'een, with much difficulty, took me out from the pond in a state of semi-consciousness. However, my entire body was shivering and my teeth were chattering due to wet clothes. There was no way to change clothes there. Brother Rafee' had been wearing a Sherwani for protection against the cold. May Allah Ta'ala keep showering His mercies on brother Rafee' in this world and the Hereafter; he took off his Sherwani, wrapped me in it, somehow brought me home, and made me sit in front of the heater. Only then did I feel life coming back in me. Thus I got the lesson that very day in which the leader of both worlds (Peace be upon him) has said:

من رعى حول الحمى أوشك أن يقع فيه

“Whoever grazes his animals near a prohibited place is likely to get in it at any moment.”

However, alas! Would that I had been able to practice upon this lesson in my actions and character!

Bhai Jaan¹, in those days, used to stay in a somewhat dark and cramped flat in Neela Gumbad, adjacent to the old building of Jamiya Ashrafiya. In the upper floor of this same flat, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Idrees Sahab Kandhlawi, and in the upper most floor the founder of Jamiya Ashrafiya, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab (May Allah Ta’ala’s mercy be upon them both) used to stay. Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab (May his secret be sanctified) was one of the prominent Khulafa (deputy in Tasawwuf) of Hazrat Hakeemul Ummah (May Allah Ta’ala’s mercy be upon him). He had actually founded Jamiya Ashrafiya in Amritsar but when Muslims began being massacred in East Punjab at the time of the creation of Pakistan, he moved to Lahore and established the Jamiya Ashrafiya which holds the honour of being the first Madrasa to be established after the founding of Pakistan. Our respected father had emphatically advised us to visit Hazrat and to be present in his (blessed) company whenever we visited Lahore. Thus I clearly remember visiting him with (late) Bhai Jaan, with me being seven years old, and being inundated with his kindnesses and *duas* (prayers). Even though there was no question of me fathoming Hazrat’s high status in those days, neither do I today, but I still remember this much that in Hazrat’s gatherings a strange kind of *Nur* (light) and serenity would be felt even in that dark and cramped flat, and it would feel as if we were under a tent of kindnesses and mercies. May Allah Ta’ala have infinite mercy on him.

During this same time one day Bhai Jaan returned from the bookstore crying, and told us that Shaykhul Islam Hazrat Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Sahab Usmani (May Allah Ta’ala’s mercy be upon him) had passed away. He had gone to Bhawalpur University, at the university’s invitation, and passed away there. Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilayihi Raji’oon². How could I comprehend his high scholarly status in that childhood age? However, deprivation of his kindnesses made us sad even in that childhood. It was only later that I realized the magnitude of the tragedy of his demise to the country and to Islam, as his passing away removed a central figure from scholarly circles, who had strung together all schools of thought into the higher objective of national interest. May Allah Ta’ala have infinite mercy on him.

Our second eldest sister respected ‘Ateeqa Khatoon Sahiba (May her shade be extended) who had been left behind in Deoband, her husband respected Munshi Basheer Ahmad Sahab (who worked in the

¹ “elder brother”, i.e. respected Muhammad Zaki Kaifi Sahab (May Allah Ta’ala’s mercy be upon him)

² “We certainly belong to Allah, and to Him we are bound to return”. It is Sunnah to recite these words when one suffers from any kind of loss, harm, discomfort or tragedy.

administration of Darul Uloom Deoband) passed away in Deoband. Our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) called her to Pakistan after completing her 'Iddah, so she also came to Lahore with her three daughters, and later reached Karachi together with us. She stayed in one portion of the quarter at Jacob Line. We stayed in Jacob Line for around two years. During this time, my elder sister respected Haseeba Khatoon (May Allah Ta'ala have mercy on her) got married and moved to her in-laws' place.

These quarters at Jacob Line, made for government officers, were of mediocre quality. They had short walls, and thieves did not have to bear much hardship in climbing their walls and entering them at night. Thus, burglars often used to break into this house. However, burglars in those days had not advanced much; after quietly climbing into a house if they found any petty thing they would consider it sufficient, and if ever they suspected someone in the house had woken up they would climb out of the house just as easily as they had climbed in. In a similar fashion small burglaries happened many times. However, one time our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) made intention for Hajj, and, having completed all formalities, had put the ticket, passport and perhaps also foreign currency into a big-looking wallet. When all of us were sleeping at night a thief entered and, God knows how, managed to get his hands on this wallet. When our respected father woke up in the morning he found all those things missing; no money, no ticket, no passport. The departure of the ship was so near that even if he could somehow arrange the money, there was no time to complete governmental procedures. As a result our respected father could not go for Hajj that year despite all preparations. Allah Ta'ala had bestowed upon Hazrat Maulana Ihtishamul Haq Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) a good sense of humour. When our respected father told him about this theft he said: "Hazrat! Now only the thief will go for Hajj." In these kinds of situations, our respected father's characteristic of being pleased with the decree of Allah Ta'ala, which we observed in him, is rarely witnessed.

After the arrival of our sister, who had come to Pakistan with her three daughters after the death of her husband, the house at Jacob Line became too small for all of us. Therefore, our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) took a house for rent in a building known as Iqbal Manzil at Campbell Street, near Burns Road. We thus moved into this new house and stayed in it for five years (i.e. 1951 to 1956). These five years proved to be very blessed in many ways, and it was during these five years that our stay in Karachi became established.

First Hajj in Childhood

One blessing I received after moving to this place is that our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) made intention to go for Hajj. The previous year as well, during our stay at Jacob Line, our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) had completed all preparations for Hajj but, as I

have written before, he could not go due to the theft of passport, ticket, etc. He had made intention again this year. This year our respected mother (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon her) and Bhai Jaan (late respected Maulana Muhammad Zaki Kaifi Sahab) also accompanied him. I was eight years old then, and it was impossible for our respected mother to travel without me, so I received the good fortune of performing Hajj at that small age. Thus, we departed for this blessed journey on 31 July 1951.

A deputy (in Tasawwuf) of Hakeem Ul Ummah Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Sahab Thanwi (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) Al-Haaj Zafar Ahmad Sahab Thanwi (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was an engineer in Pan Islamic Steamship Company. A ship belonging to this company, called Safeena-e-'Arab, used to carry *Hajis*¹ during the Hajj season. He had booked a big cabin at the upper deck of this ship, in one portion of which he stayed with his respected wife, a son Musharraf Ali Sahab, and a daughter. We stayed in the other portion with our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). I was beginning to realize the sanctity of this journey of Hajj at that age. Along with it, however, the curiosity of travelling by ship had also crept in. The son and daughter of Al-Haaj Zafar Ahmad were almost the same age as me, and soon I developed such frankness with them that the ship became a playground for us. Whatever time I got off from this playing around, I would spend it in learning the *duas* (prayers) of Tawaf from a book about Hajj. Approximately one interesting and entertainment-filled week was passed on the ship, until I heard our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) and others asking the Captain as to when the ship would pass by Yamlam. (In those days the research on this matter suggested that it was necessary to be in the state of Ihram when the ship passed by Yamlam. A later research concluded otherwise, the details of which can be found in Jawahirul Fiqh). Thus when it was announced that the ship was going to pass by Yamlam soon, everyone put on their Ihram. I was also made to wear Ihram. The entire ship was echoing with proclamations of "Labbaik" at that time, and we reached Jeddah the very next day.

Jeddah was a small city at that time. A Hujjaj Building was built here to house *Hajis* for their short stay in Jeddah. Thus, we stayed in a wooden room of this building. When we would take a step out of the room, the land would be so damp that we would sink into it along with our shoes, and it would be difficult to walk. There was only one shop selling food, and we could clearly see red insects (weevils) in the *Rotis* it sold. Even if we cleaned the *Rotis*, we would still have to confront the smell of the insects. As a result, we had to satiate our hunger with something else. There were very few paved roads in the whole of Jeddah, all other being unpaved. When it was time to go to Makkah Mukarramah we came to know that we had to go very far away to the bus stand. When we reached the bus stand the bus came after several hours, and we departed for Makkah Mukarramah. Only a part of the road was paved, and I seem to remember

¹ One performing Hajj

that it took us four to five hours to reach Makkah Mukarramah. Our destination finally arrived, for which we had been waiting for a week.

It was a spiritually uplifting spectacle when we entered Makkah Mukarramah at 'Isha time. The bus stopped at something which looked like a door, where several people carrying Zamzam in *Surahis* were welcoming those entering by giving them Zamzam to drink in white perfumed bowls. The blessings of Makkah Mukarramah had begun. Our belongings were unloaded at the Mu'allim's place. The days of Hajj were very near and all of us had put on Ihram for "Qiraan". Hence, our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) took all of us to the sacred Haram the same night. The spectacle of seeing the Baitullah, wrapped in a blue Ghilaaf (cover), is still in front of my eyes. Despite my small age, I was mesmerized at looking at this embodiment of awe and beauty. However it felt as if I had seen this spectacle before. My elders were crying, and we began Tawaf in this state. I had read the method of performing Tawaf from the book about Hajj during our journey. The imagination had forged innumerable images of Hajar Al-Aswad and Rukn Al-Yamani, and I had also memorized some of the *duas* (prayers) of Tawaf written in the book. However I forgot everything once we reached here. Thus, I completed the Tawaf by following our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), without comprehending anything. Next, we had to do Sa'ee between Safa and Marwa. The Mas'aa, i.e. place of doing Sa'ee, was not separated as it is today; rather there was a common street between Safa and Marwa which also had shops on both sides. Hawker carts were also parked around, and cars also used to pass by. Sa'ee had to be done between those shops and cars. Our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) kept us children with him at first, but when he felt that there was a chance of children being trampled or getting lost in the uproar, he hired a car and put us three children in it, and emphasized to the driver to stay with us at all times and also fixed a place where he could meet him after Sa'ee in case of separation. However, only a short while after sitting in the car our respected father, mother and Bhai Jaan (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon them) disappeared from our view in a wave of crowd. When we found ourselves in the hands of a complete stranger who could not understand our language, and we could not understand his, our patience gave way and all three of us were at the verge of weeping. Now I don't remember how the Sa'ee was finished and how we met our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him).

A friend of our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), late Haji Dawood Maait Sahab was residing in Makkah Mukarramah, and he asked our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) to stay at his place instead of the Mu'allim's place. Perhaps very few people have survived who had seen the sacred Haram of those days. The sacred Haram only had the (old) Turkish construction, and three-storey flats were built adjacent to it in all directions. Where the internal stairs of Babul Fath are located today, there used to be a small door of the Haram near it called Bab Ar-Ribaat. Stairs from this

Bab Ar-Ribaat would lead to the residential flats, and Haji Dawood Maait Sahab's house was located on the third floor. We stayed in a room of this house such that a window from it used to open in the direction of the Sacred Haram, and the scene of Baitullah Shareef, Meezab-e-Rahmat and Hateem would be in front of us all the time.

There used to be a small population in Mina in those days, and Haji Dawood Maait Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) had rented a house in Mina where all of us stayed. We left for 'Arafah the next day. What understanding of the rites of Hajj could I have at that small age? I just remember that the sight of tents spread out as far as the eyes could see, and everyone wearing the same kind of clothes was a stunning view for me. Despite the severe heat, people were fervently reciting the Talbiya and briskly walking towards the Jabal Ar-Rahmah. The heat was extreme that day. Nevertheless, our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) at first left the tent in the direction of Jabal Ar-Rahmah. However, people told that even if he reached Jabal Ar-Rahmah, it would be impossible to return to his tent due to the tents being dismantled. Therefore, he returned to our tent and became busy in Wuqoof, along with our mother and Bhai Jaan, with great devotion and humility.

After sunset we departed 'Arafah, and reached Muzdalifa. Muzdalifa was a sandy desert at that time which had no light except moonlight. After the entire day's heat, the cool sand under us under the open sky was a great blessing. All of us were tired, but it was necessary to safeguard our belongings first as thefts and robberies were frequent in those days. This was the era of the governance of the founder of the Saudi Government, Sultan 'Abdul 'Azeez (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). Law and order had not come under full control by that time. Therefore, all elders decided to put our belongings in the center and to put our beddings around them. We thus did that. After putting this security mechanism in place, all of us went into sleep as soon as we lay down. When we woke up in the morning, we found that one box from our belongings, which contained all the necessary things of all of us, was missing. It also contained the clothes we would wear after coming out of the state of Ihram, as well as some cash, our passports, etc. It seems that since, for safety, we had put this box in the center and all of us had slept around it, the thief would have understood that it contained the most valuable loot, for which such security measures had been placed. Therefore, the extraordinary precautionary steps proved to be the real reason of the theft. Mutanabbi has said regarding such cases:

الأمر لله ربّ مجتهد

ما خاب إلاّ لأنّه جاهد

و متّق السّهام مرسلّة

يحيّد من حابض إلى صارِد

Meaning: The matter is in the hands of Allah; many a hard worker failed because of their hard work. If an arrow approaches someone from in front, he tries to evade it by getting out of its trajectory. But the arrow misses the target and still hits him.

As a result, all members of our family were left in such a state that we did not have anything except the sheets of Ihram. Therefore when we returned to Mina that day, and the time to come out of Ihram came after performing sacrifice, our respected father, late Bhai Jaan and I did not have any stitched clothes to wear. Finally, Haji Dawood Maait Sahab and his sons gave us their clothes to wear, and we wore them for three days. Now I don't remember what arrangements our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) made after the loss of the passports.

(Continued...)